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dry as if there wasn't any saliva in them'.[1] It is very important to natives to get the right proportion of relish to porridge. Every one wants to get as much relish as possible, and here the rules of procedure are fixed. An old man may tear off a lump of *ubwali* and make it into a hollow spoon. This he will dip into the liquid relish and then pick up as much relish as possible (*ukuleme nkondwa*). The child, or inferior, may only just dip the porridge into the relish to moisten it (*ukutumpika*), and thus the proportion of vegetable varies very much according to age. A young man will not dare *ukuleme nkondwa* until he is given the permission by his father, said to be granted when the boy is able to do a full day's work in the gardens. A girl should wait the invitation of her mother before trying to take an adult portion of relish, and on the few occasions when a wife eats with her husband, in the privacy of their hut at night, she is supposed merely to dip her porridge in the stew like a child, until she reaches middle or old age when, among the Bemba, all sex disabilities seem to disappear.

Bemba eating customs can therefore be said to differ considerably from our own, both as regards the rhythm of meals, the regularity of daily intake, and the serving and rate of consumption, but in each case the manner of eating is just as precisely defined by cultural rule and related as strictly to the general economic system and social grouping of the people concerned. Even the proportion of liquid to solid, or relish to porridge, is prescribed by etiquette.

Beer Drinking.

Bemba beer (*ubwalua*) is one of their most important foodstuffs. It is made from the staple cereal itself.[2] It is a valuable source of vitamin B in which the diet is otherwise deficient.[3] On the day when it is drunk very few natives eat any other form of food, and some individuals, mostly chiefs, subsist on it entirely from day to day. But *ubwalua* is far more than a mere food. It is the people's only kind of entertainment, the chief break in the monotony of

[1] Information collected by Mrs. Gore-Browne.

[2] The Bantu peoples make beer from a number of different sources according to their environment, eleusine, Kaffir-corn, maize, cassava, bananas, honey, and, in the Congo, wine from palms and sugar-cane. The Bemba preference for millet beer is shared by a number of people such as the Bisa (of the swamps), or the Venda of the Transvaal (H. Stayt, *The Bavenda*, p. 35) who grow the cereal specially for the purpose.

[3] Kaffir beer is included as part of the rations issued to mine-workers on the Rand scale chiefly for this reason.

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All these Kinship dues are acquiring A good deal of importance 423

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at the moment, since there is a chance of making money by the sale of millet or vegetables. Where a husband may not have exercised his claims to property in the form of food, and is anyhow obliged to put his wife in charge of it, he tends to consider that money from the sale of produce is his alone, and irresponsible characters sometimes dispose of food for low prices early in the year, leaving their families in want. I noticed also that the husband's relatives sometimes tried to make money in this way. In a modern village near Kasama I saw a man's sister claim all the money obtained by his wife from the sale of pumpkins at exorbitant prices to labourers in the district. She took 1*s.* 6*d.* from her sister-in-law and gave her back 3*d.*, saying to me, 'Well, my brother cut her the garden, so the food is his.'

Prerogatives of Age.

Besides this balance of claims between the affinal relatives, the elder kinsmen in general have certain rights over the food in a young couple's granary. The woman's mother and elder sister can come and demand baskets of grain from her, while the man's elder brother also asks for food when he needs it. These dues are usually exacted as between elder sister and younger sister—usually own sisters—in each case the two refer to each other as 'My great one' (*umukalamba uandi*) or 'My little one' (*mwaice uandi*). The same holds true as between elder brother and younger brother and the same terms are used. An elder sister is very likely living in the same village as her junior, sharing supplies with her. In this case she merely exercises her rights over luxuries like beer or snuff, or perhaps commandeers some flour already ground. If, on the other hand, she has married into another village she occasionally comes and claims baskets of food if in need and has the right, denied to a more distant relative, to climb up the steps to her sister's granary and look at her store. Elder and younger brothers are usually living in different villages according to the rule of matrilocal marriage, but I have known a senior send to his young brother to claim a pot of beer. The father has no legal claims on his children, and I was told he would not send to ask his sons or daughters for food, but that they would give him presents 'out of respect' and he would come and stay with them. The mother, as we have seen, claims rights over the food of her son as well as her daughter. The *nalume* of the man can make

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423 peremptory demands upon him, and I noticed that in old-fashioned villages this was often done, but the same would not be true of 888 the wife's mother's brother. In the same way the father's sister, the *nyina senge* can ask a maternal niece for baskets of grain, although she would be unlikely to do so in the case of her maternal nephew.

The headman can ask his villagers to help him with food if he is in want, although this would be an unlikely occurrence, but the rights of a chief to send for supplies to help him in sudden difficulties, particularly over entertaining, are frequently exercised (cf. p. 253). In fact, so much is the idea of authority associated with the right to levy dues of this kind that natives use the word *ukutula* or 'to give tribute' of any demand made by an elder relative of a younger.

Modern Changes in Kinship Dues.

423 It is common knowledge that in many Bantu societies money is now being substituted for the older kinship dues levied on food 602 or cattle. To what extent is this the case in the Bemba area? We 177 have seen that the Bemba husband occasionally tries to sell the contents of his granary, whereas formerly, though he was actually the owner of the millet store, he allowed his wife the use of it. In the same way I have seen elder brothers make demands on their juniors for shillings or sixpences instead of asking for a portion of their grain or beer. But this seems only to occur in districts near white towns, and the practice was confined as far as I saw it to men of the clerk or domestic servant type. Big dues levied on young men's mine-earnings, such as are reported from so many parts of South Africa, and from the Ila district in Northern Rhodesia,[1] seemed very uncommon among the Bemba. I think this fact can probably be accounted for in two ways. First, in a society in which the power of the mother's family and that of the father's is very evenly divided, the elders are not in such a strong position to exact dues from their younger relatives as they are in a markedly patriarchal or matriarchal society. Among the Bemba it may be the father, the maternal uncle, or the maternal grandfather who is the boy's male guardian, and it will depend on personality and general circumstances which finally maintains his authority, but in a typical patrilineal society such as those of the

[1] Smith and Dale, op. cit., vol. i, p. 385.

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said, "*Yangwe!* Hunger will catch us!" So we planted every seed at once.'

As a contrast to this inefficient cultivation, I found in these communities one or two natives more skilled in Bemba agriculture than any one else in the country. One cultivator, himself an artisan at work in Kasama, taught me more about Bemba agriculture than I learnt from any one else, and had a larger strip of land under cultivation than would have been possible in an ordinary village. He profited from his fellows' constant movement and lack of interest in their gardens. The few men who were paying labour were also making experiments on a more daring scale than would have been usual elsewhere. Lastly, several old women, entirely without support of male relatives, which would rarely have happened in an ordinary village, were hoeing with an energy thought frenzied by their fellows 'because of their hunger'. This individual variation in cultivation is, I think, characteristic of the modern Bemba community. It is not only that an individual household economy is appearing and with it inequalities in food consumption, but also here and there specialist gardeners, trying to make a success of village life instead of going to the mines. For instance, at Mubanga, six miles off, was a community of enterprising cattle-owners who had obtained permission in 1924 to build huts apart in the bush so that their small herds might not damage the crops of their neighbours. These two natives were plainly men of unusual initiative who had acquired knowledge of cattle-keeping during their travels down south, and had realised the money-making possibilities of selling milk to the small white community of Kasama. They were later joined by natives from elsewhere who wanted the chance to settle near Kasama, and the community was finally constituted a village by the chief, who appointed one of his sisters, Mubanga—a disreputable and unpopular old lady—as headwoman. She was joined by individualists of all sorts—those of the old régime and those of the new. Her adjutant, a middle-aged man who came from another village, was so much disliked that he had bought himself three goats in order to get the necessary permission from the Government to live outside the village. Near his small settlement was a native convicted of sorcery by the Hunting ordeal.[1] No one would have him in their village, so he borrowed five pounds from a well-to-do nephew at Ndola,

[1] Cf. p. 345.

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
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The Cultural Setting

576 Bemba ideal behaviour is that of the *mwina umusumba* or man living at the court, as distinct from the *mwina impanga* or inhabitant of the bush; the country bumpkin.

577 A commoner is expected to be loyal to the death to his chief,
565 and to accept the fact that his rulers have the right to all his time and all his possessions. He must be silent and respectful. Members of the crocodile clan are expected to be arrogant and even ruthless, but they must be generous in feeding their adherents.

888 Extreme deference is paid to age. Each child knows his exact
561 position of seniority in a group of village children and is given precedence in games. Each group of men sitting in the village shelter does the same. A younger child is scolded for putting itself forward before its elders.

562 Bemba women share many of these ideals. They work for their
622 chief in his gardens and make the same abject obeisance to him. They have a lively interest in the ritual centred in the court. They play an important part in attracting followers and kinsmen to a village. A headman's following or 'crowd' (*bumba*) is attracted by means of beer, good entertainment and company, and these depend both on the successful organization of labour, which is largely a man's job, and on the wise and tactful distribution of food, and happy personal relations, which are mainly in the women's sphere.

562 Women, unlike men, are admired for industry and for resource
842 in finding food in the bush. They are honoured for bearing and
888 rearing many children and for courage in childbirth which is often, under Bemba conditions, a terrible ordeal. They are expected to be loyal to their own sex and to accept the domination of older women.

562 In the sphere of tribal life women have an important part to
644 play, or rather one that is thought to be important. As we saw,
622 two senior princesses have districts of their own; and junior princesses often act as village 'headmen'. In all these cases they wield political authority but are regarded as chiefs with feminine attributes, that is to say, with more gentleness and hospitality to the needy. They are not expected to be ruthless in discipline. They have male counsellors to advise and support them. Besides these real political functions the senior women have important ritual duties since, like their 'brothers', they are in charge of

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
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tionship.[1] But the girl also assumes a position in an informal group composed of the women of the neighbourhood. The chisungu candidate of one year works the following year for the same *nacimbusa* and joins the ranks of her young helpers. The mistress of the ceremony is often the girl's father's sister, so that the head of this loosely organized cult group is also the senior woman of the patrikin. All *banacimbusa* of a district are arranged in order of age, descent and reputation, although their position is now only recognized in terms of respect and formal salutations. Associated with these women leaders of the society are younger married women of intelligence and personality, who are beginning to practise as midwives, as well as those initiated some years previously. Girls just initiated are under an obligation to help their own *nacimbusa* for one or two subsequent ceremonies, but they need not advance any further up the ladder of fame unless they want to do so. The chisungu gives them entry to the company of the leading women in the neighbourhood and makes it possible for them to rise gradually in the hierarchy of potential *nacimbusa*, although it is not compulsory for them to do so.

Within this loose neighbourhood group the older women are honoured, not as a group of equals, but, in line with Bemba ideals, as a number of persons arranged in an exact order of precedence. This hierarchy of age and fame is constantly expressed in the ceremony. 'The arm-pit is not higher than the shoulder' is the song which the company sings over and over again.[2] The chief *nacimbusa* appears in her plumed head-dress. The *mbusa* are offered again and again in order of rank precedence to the older women present. They are offered kneeling, and rolling on the back as to a chief. Dances are given 'for respect'. In fact more rites express the hierarchy of rank than any other form of symbolic behaviour in the chisungu.

It is perhaps worth noting that a hierarchy of closely related women is a much more common occurrence in a matrilineal tribe

[1] See page 44 which describes the chain of events which begins with the betrothal presents, and continues with the giving of food to the son-in-law, the first puberty rite, the chisungu, the marriage itself, and then the entering-in of the son-in-law some years later.

[2] I.e. the arm-pit was created to be beneath the shoulder, and this order can never be reversed.